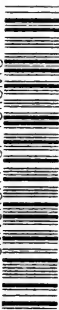


UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



3 1761 00629675 0

Historical sketch of
the origin and work
of the Hay River
Mission, Great Slave
Lake, N.W.T.

E
98
M6H5



THE
A. H. U. COLQUHOUN
LIBRARY
OF CANADIAN HISTORY

Historical Sketch
of the
Origin and Work
of the
Hay River Mission,
Great Slave Lake,
N.W.T.



E
98
33
M 15 45

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

Historical Sketch of the Origin and Work of the Hay River Mission, Great Slave Lake, N.W.T.

THE Indians of Tenni or Slavi tribe, who are the resident Indians at Hay River, asked Bishop Reeve for a missionary to be sent to work among them. In the year 1893 on the 29th of June, Mr. T. J. Marsh (later Rev. T. J. Marsh) was sent to begin the work. Mr. Marsh lived with the Chief, whose name was "Chantla," during the summer, and spent his spare moments in clearing the trees off a piece of land on which he purposed to put up a dwelling for himself.

During the following winter logs were hewn, a schoolroom erected and a house partially finished. The roof was put on on May 1st by Mr. Marsh and Sheridan Lawrence, who had been sent to assist him. He had arrived March 28th, 1894. Rev. William Spendlove came on March 18th, 1894, from Fort Resolution, on a visit to Mr. Marsh.

Previous to this Mr. Marsh had begun a little school on October 11th. The first class assembled in the rooms



he was then using as his dwelling. They numbered only five and were all boys.

In June, 1894, Charles Camsell (a graduate of St. John's College, Winnipeg) was sent by Bishop Reeve to assist Mr. Marsh at Hay River until September, and Mr. Marsh remained alone the next winter.

In September of 1894 the Indians were very short of provisions and Mr. Marsh had only a very limited supply of imported provisions which had to last him for a year until the next yearly steamer should arrive. The Indians came to him for help and he told them he would go to the nets with any of them if they wished to go in the face of a fairly strong gale of wind. One of the Indian young men volunteered to go with him so they started off and reached the nets in safety. I now give from his journal his own account of the journey:

"Sept. 22nd, 1894. To-night I have to record the saddest event that has as yet ever occurred in my experience. While trying to visit my nets in a strong wind, I had the sad experience of seeing my helper taken from me by the cold hand of death. Having decided that we could not visit the nets owing to the roughness of the sea, we turned and

were on our way home when a huge wave broke over our skiff, half filling it with water. My poor Indian helper, a young man of about 22 years of age, immediately became terror-stricken, while perhaps I did not do the wisest thing under the circumstances, for I left the boat for him to guide while I hastened to bale out the water. We were drifting towards the shore and nearing the fierce breakers when another huge swell broke over us and our little skiff immediately sank from beneath us. We each took an oar in our hands and waited for the skiff to return, which it did in a moment, but bottom upwards. We clambered on top and then the struggle for life began. Many and many times did the skiff roll, sometimes we were unable to retain our hold, but we both stayed beside it. At last after much effort I was able to straddle the stern and steady it a little so that the poor boy might ride upon the bottom, holding fast to the false keel. Thus we drifted for some time until we reached the land, and the fierce breakers began to roll in upon us very rapidly. We were both again swept from our perch on the bottom, and then came another struggle as the boat began again to

roll over and over. At last, by the aid of Heaven's King, upon whom we had both been calling, perhaps more earnestly than ever before, I was enabled to steady the skiff with its bottom down, while at the same time I had to lend a helping hand to enable my poor comrade, who was nearly exhausted, not only to clamber in but even to reach the skiff at all.

"Thus we drifted for some time, slowly nearing the shore. At the same time my voice rang loud in calls for help from shore, as my heart rose in earnest prayer for my Indian lad that he might be saved. With the help of an Indian who had waded in to meet us, I was enabled to get the poor fellow from the skiff to the shore, a distance of nearly thirty yards. But alas ! that earthly help is vain when God commands. Although the poor boy was alive when he reached the shore, and conscious but a few minutes before, the command was obeyed and God's angel took the soul and left the lifeless body as a monument of time's eternal change.

"Truly, in the midst of life we are in death. God has spared my life, unworthy though it be. May the question, Why ? solemnize my thoughts

and make me to live, not as though this was my home, but like a pilgrim whose home is in another land. How near the shores to that other land I came, God only knows."

Just exactly what happened after they reached the shore is not known for a certainty, but the Indians relate the following as having taken place :

They tell us some of the Indians wanted to kill Mr. Marsh, but others saved him, Mr. Marsh said. When he came back to consciousness a huge fire was burning, and "Sophie-mo" (an Indian woman) and Murray (an Indian man) had him in their arms trying to impart life from their bodies. The house was not yet finished inside, but the floor had been laid, and, as the Indians were making such a disturbance about the dead Indian boy, Mr. Marsh told them to bring the body up and put it in the house. They did so and all went away and left him sick, weak and alone with the dead, while ringing in his ears were Indian words accusing him of murder.

The following day the young man was buried but for two years the family kept up a persecution, going every little while to the grave, weeping and wailing,

and then, returning to Mr. Marsh, sought to work on his sympathy.

Mr. Marsh being of a nervous temperament, suffered greatly from the shock, and at the kind invitation of Bishop Reeve he went to spend Christmas with him at Fort Simpson. On his return to Hay River the loneliness seemed even harder to bear, but he sought to expel it by filling every moment of his time in work with and for the Indians, trying to teach those who came and listened, and by completing his house.

In July, 1895, help was sent to Mr. Marsh. Dr. Reazin came at Bishop Reeve's request, and about this time it was decided to move the former pupils of the school at Fort Resolution to Hay River. They were sent over in a skiff, seven in number, with a man to act as interpreter, who afterwards turned out to be a worthless fellow in that he was both lazy and untruthful.

Poor Mr. Marsh ! Here he was with a large family on his hands (they were boarding pupils) and nothing to feed them. With only one net to set for fish it was hard to secure enough to feed them. Dr. Reazin spent his days in the woods hunting their supper and

they went to the net for their breakfast. The Indians would bring them a fish or two as they could spare them, and refused pay for them.

The September boat brought their supplies, and also Miss Anna B. Marsh. With her came Julia Sim, who had been at Resolution when the school was sent to Hay River. Miss Marsh was a trained nurse and a very capable woman, and very soon order reigned in one household at Hay River.

During the winter of 1895-6, an epidemic of measles broke out, and though there were twenty-five deaths in the Roman Catholic School at Fort Providence, there was not one death at Hay River, owing to the good care given by Dr. Reazin and Miss Marsh and God's blessing on their efforts. This was a great help to our school, as it gave the Indians confidence in our workers.

In April, 1896, Dr. Reazin left for Fort Simpson to assist Bishop Reeve, and sometime about the end of June an Indian woman died very suddenly. As the Indians were very superstitious, they would not help to bury her, so Miss Marsh and Julia Sim, our native

worker, had to help to carry the body to the grave.

Mrs. Reeve came up to Hay River from Fort Simpson for a short visit in August and remained there while the steamer went to Fort Smith and returned.

The steamer arrived September 15th, 1890, and on it a new lady helper in the person of Miss Margaret Tims, who later undertook to do the housework so that Miss Marsh could teach the school, she being far from well and very tired. Miss Tims gives us her first impression of what she found at Hay River as follows :

“There were six houses in the village and a good sized clearing about the Mission House. The front garden was full of growing vegetables and gay with flowers and vines, whilst inside everything was bright and homelike. I did not know then what hard work it took to keep it all nice (but I know now). I felt very thankful for such pleasant surroundings. When I looked at the Indians themselves my heart sank. Would I ever get used to them ? They were awful, especially the women. I would tell myself over and over that they were my sisters and I must love

them if I would do them good, but it was no use. I was ashamed to think I felt like that and tried to pretend to myself that I loved the Indians and gradually the victory was won."

About four weeks after Miss Tims arrived at Hay River, Miss Marsh took ill and was ill for over a month. Miss Tims writes :

"I tried to do my best to teach school and look after the house, but it was a poor best and every day I wondered more and more how Miss Marsh had managed to do everything for a year. Julia Sim was a good faithful girl, but, like all Indian girls, she needed to be well looked after. A short time after I went there she took it into her head that once a day was enough to milk the cows. Of course the cows would soon go dry as she did not milk them very well. I told Mr. Marsh if he would bring the cows up I would milk them. As I was milking, Julia came out to see what was going on and shouted to me, "Look out, Miss Tims, that cow puts her toes in the pail." This made me laugh so hard I nearly let her put them in. When we went into the house Mr. Marsh said, "You see, Julia, we can get the cows milked without you. You are

not the only one who can milk." And I never had to milk for Julia again, although the only answer she gave then was, "Humph, funny if she could not milk. She was raised with the pigs, the cows and sheeps." All the time she stayed at the Mission she was jealous of me, I don't know why. If she left anything undone and I did it, it would never be left again, so perhaps in one way it was a good thing."

They had a good fishery that year. Over four thousand fish were caught, which was sufficient for all the winter. As Miss Marsh was better now and Mr. Marsh was suffering from his teeth, he made up his mind to go out to civilization and began making preparations. In November Chief Sunrise's son John was taken ill with something like quinsy. He was persuaded to come to the Mission and Miss Tims took care of him under Miss Marsh's directions and he soon got better. He went home and in a couple of days they came up and told them he was bleeding at the nose. Mr. Marsh and Miss Tims went down—Miss Marsh was not strong enough to go out—but the Indians would not let them do anything to stop the bleeding and he died the next day really from

fear, it is likely, although Mrs. Sunrise said it was because Miss Tims put a girl's apron string round his neck. His nose was bleeding so slowly they did not think it could have killed him so soon, but many of the Indians in the village "made medicine" over him (after native custom) and that in itself was enough to kill him. Sunrise felt his death keenly, as he was a bright, good boy—just the opposite to his brother Paul—and a good hunter. Mr. Marsh had succeeded with the help of Charlie Norn and the Indians in putting up the kitchen and the walls of another house ; the kitchen was used for a store. There was a canvas partition across the upstairs of the house and Mr. Marsh slept in one half and the girls in the other. Miss Marsh and Miss Tims had a little bedroom off the sitting room and the boys slept in the schoolroom, rolling up their blankets and putting them in a box in the day time. Mr. Marsh held two services every Sunday and had singing in the evening. There was no Indian room. The Indians all sat round the kitchen and were often seen lifting the lids of pots to see what was cooking, but there was not much to cook, the principal food being fish and

potatoes with a slice of bread or a small piece of pudding once a day.

As Miss Marsh did not feel very strong, Miss Tims tried to do a little of the visiting she had been doing, taking Julia or Arthur Hardisty with her as interpreter. They would always listen to her but seldom asked her to come back. They seemed to have no desire to learn. If she showed them pictures or told them a story they would listen, but if she began to talk to them of sin they would tell her they never sinned. They seemed to have no feeling of need for a Saviour. Mr. and Miss Marsh met with the same thing, and it seemed like trying to break down a thick stone wall with a few pebbles. They could make no impression as far as spiritual things were concerned, though the Indians improved in other ways.

A few weeks before Christmas Mr. Marsh went to Providence to see Mr. and Mrs. John Hope, who lived there then, and Mr. Scott and his family. He was gone about ten days. While he was away one of the cattle was taken sick, and while Miss Marsh was a good nurse where man was the patient, she knew nothing of the care of the lower animals. Miss Tims searched the book-

case in hopes there might be a book there that would tell her what to do, but was disappointed. There was plenty of theology but very little on medicine. She went out with Charlie to the byre to see poor Isaac (the ox) and noticed his legs were sore. She thought she would rub them with some liniment but the ox evidently did not like it and threw his head round a good deal. She asked Charlie to hold him by the horns which he did, but Isaac gave his head a great swing and pulled away from Charlie, hitting her fair in the eye with his horn and causing it to become swollen and discoloured for some days.

All summer long Miss Marsh had kept the boys dressed in trousers made from flour sacks. They had one good pair for Sunday, that was all, and four or five flour sacks was all the material she had. She cut up some of her own clothes to help cover the girls. She had no machine and all this sewing had to be done by hand, when she should have been sleeping. Do you wonder she broke down? She sent out a large order out of her own pocket for material to make clothes for the children, and the Toronto W.A. had responded nobly to

Mr. Marsh's call for aid, sending in five or six bales. They came on the same boat as Miss Tims did and as she had a sewing machine with her, they soon had the children nicely dressed.

The day after Christmas they all went to Wood Island for a picnic. The men built a huge bonfire about six feet high and there they roasted fish and made tea. Everyone seemed to enjoy every minute of the time.

It was decided that Mr. Marsh should go out to civilization, leaving the beginning of February. All were busy up to that time getting everything ready both for Mr. Marsh and for those who were staying behind, but at last everything was done and he started off. All the Indians were up to see Mr. Marsh off and he told them he hoped they would be good to those who were left at the Mission and they were. Everything went well for a month and then Miss Marsh was taken ill, so ill that it was feared she would not get better, and she thought herself she would die. One day she asked Miss Tims to bring Moray to see her and she got him to make her a box. When he brought it home she said, "Now, if I die you have a box to put me in." Miss Tims

laughed heartily for Moray had put a partition in the middle of the box to make it strong, so Miss Tims told her she could curl up in one end and the other would do for herself. But she did not die. God never sends us more than we can bear and it seemed as though her death just then would have been more than could have been borne, separated as they were from everybody. After Miss Marsh was better Miss Tims enjoyed the winter very much. Everything was novel and she began to get interested in the Indian boys. While Miss Marsh was still weak and not able for much she often gave those who came into the kitchen a lesson, and every Sunday Miss Tims read the Service and tried to teach them a little from the picture rolls with Charlie as interpreter. Then in the afternoon they had singing and everyone came. They often sang ten or twelve hymns, the Indians choosing them.

Charlie Norn was afraid they would not get the Indians to help them put in their garden, but Miss Tims happened to find that the Indians were out of tobacco, so she sent to Resolution for some. When gardening time came she produced it. Every man had to work

two days for the privilege of buying half a pound of tobacco and they had as many as ten men a day working. Old Bill, the ox, baulked on them almost at the last furrow, but Miss Tims got a pail of potatoes and went ahead of him and coaxed him to finish up. Moray had taken out and squared sixty logs for them and Esshi and William Chantla sawed them into lumber. They had enough boards ready for Mr. Marsh to finish up the kitchen for a room for himself as it was expected that he would bring a bride back with him.

Miss Marsh thought of going home in June as she felt so poorly, and they expected it would not be long after the Steamer passed until Mr. Marsh got back, but she did not get the chance as towards the last of June the "Wrigley" passed by on its way to Smith and did not call, so it was quite evident that for that year at least Miss Marsh was to remain at the Mission. Miss Tims was very glad, as she did not relish the thought of being left alone, even for a few weeks. Just about this time, one day news came that strangers were coming down the river and about thirty canoes full of Indians from the

Horse Track landed. Miss Tims went to the village and shook hands with them. They were all well dressed, fine looking men. They never came to the little services, but always came to the singing in the evening and in the morning they held a service of their own, which some of the Indians attended, Sunrise among the number, but the old Chief Chantla Moray's people and Sophie Mo's people never left and it did encourage the workers to hear them say, "Never mind, if there was only a woman to pray, her prayers were good for them." With what longing eyes the workers now watched for some sign of Mr. Marsh, going across the portage almost every day as time passed and he did not come. The Indians began to think he would not return. Some time in July Mr. Bredin and Mr. Armstrong passed on their way out to Edmonton. Charlie Norn had bought some fur for Mr. Armstrong during the winter and he stopped to bale it. While they stayed Mr. Bredin helped hoe the potatoes and vegetables and Miss Marsh sent letters to her brother by them. When they were gone the workers settled down to wait again, but it was not until August 7th, 1897, that

word came a scow was coming and they knew Mr. Marsh was near. He arrived about three or four in the morning, with Mrs. Marsh, Miss Veitch, Stanley Soanes, four trappers, Mr. Clark, Mr. Anthony, Mr. Short and Mr. George. There was also another scow with them belonging to three miners. The trappers had an outfit with them and were going up Hay River to trap while the miners were going down the Mackenzie to the Nahanni. It was such a relief to have them all safe home, but Mrs. Marsh was very sick and they were all very tired. It was proposed that Miss Tims should go to see the Hay River falls with the trappers, taking Julia with her as companion. All the Indians were going away also, as they had only been waiting for Mr. Marsh's arrival. He gave them a feast in honor of his wedding and they had a big dance in front of Chief Sunrise's house.

All the winter the women were alone, they had their fish in an old house down where the Hudson's Bay Company's house stands and they never lost one although there was no lock on the door. If it was very stormy the Indians would ask for some fish, but then, when Miss Marsh was so ill, if they got

a tarmigan or a rabbit they would share it with her, and they also shared all the meat they killed.

Mr. Stringer (now Bishop) had sent up a whale boat, for the use of the Mission, by the "Wrigley," but by mistake it had been left at Simpson. After Miss Tims' return Mr. and Miss Marsh went up to get it, but the weather was so stormy the return journey took over a month and they had very hard work getting home.

One of the miners who came in with Mr. Marsh, named Brown, and Stanley Soanes helped to get in the harvest of potatoes and vegetables, while Miss Veitch and Miss Tims tried to keep things going in the house, Mrs. Marsh being ill. Bishop Reeve was also at the Mission and, as the "Wrigley" was very late, spent three weeks there. Every one was glad to see Mr. Marsh back safe and Miss Marsh was much better for her trip. They had now twelve children in the school and Miss Marsh taught any Indian man, woman or child who was willing to learn to read in their own language, while Mr. Marsh had the Sunday services and all the work to attend to with no one to help him but Charlie, who has learned a

great deal since then. The winter of 1897-8 Stanley Soanes was with them and helped with the outside work. At Christmas the trappers who were up the river came down and, hearing the Klondyke reports, did not go back to their trapping again, but stayed in the village, getting ready to start to the Klondyke in the spring. Several parties came over from Resolution also, and Mr. Marsh was able to get a little help to saw lumber, but only very little, and a new house was wanted very badly. Mr. Brown and a Mr. Kennedy stayed in the house and worked for the Mission. The Griffin Brothers from Edmonton came over from Resolution the spring of 1898 and Charles also helped with the Mission work. Mr. Marsh was very glad of all help, as only part of the walls of the three-storey building were up and 22 people were living in what is the older part of the building, including schoolroom and kitchen. There was no Indian room but the kitchen, and the school boys and Charlie had to sleep in the schoolroom. The store house was the scow Mr. Marsh brought in, turned upside down and made into a sort of root house, the top and sides being covered

with earth and there were one or two small windows in the top.

While the work of building was going on, the workers were also trying to teach the Indians in the village a little, although they found it very slow work. They would not learn English, saying English was no good. The French priest said so and they would rather learn French. The workers supposed that they said the same thing to the priest regarding French, but they did not know it and as most of them were new in the country and knew little or nothing of the language they could do very little teaching among the Indians, although school was kept every day and the children made good progress in their English reading and writing, but not so good in arithmetic. Mr. Marsh also held evening prayers in English every day with a couple of prayers in Indian, and sometimes a hymn as well. This, with the Sunday services, Mrs. Marsh's house to house visiting, Miss Marsh's individual teaching, and the school with all the many duties in connection with it, was regularly carried on. Miss Veitch was Mrs. Marsh's helper and helped to lighten many a dark day with her bright sayings and merry ways.

The miners from Resolution, among whom was a woman, Mrs. Craig, who was travelling with her husband, left for Providence in April, all except Mr. Brown, who stayed until later. Some time in the early spring the Indians brought in a report that a white man was starving at Pointe la Roche, his feet being badly frozen. Mr. Marsh sent over and had him brought to the Mission. His name was Carlson or Charleson and that was all we ever knew about him. He always seemed afraid of anyone asking him questions. He left for Peel River about the 6th or 7th of June with a party of miners who had come in from Athabasca Landing. Dear old Mr. Brown left at the same time. He had been a great help to the Mission and none of those who were at Hay River at that time have forgotten him or have anything but a grateful memory of him.

This summer of 1898 the garden was better than ever before. Stanley Soanes took charge of it, as he understood gardening better than most of the others. After that first boat in June the miners flocked by. Scarcely a day passed that did not bring some new face and some days dozens of them, as

the visitor's book kept at the Mission will show. At one time there were 21 scows or boats of different shapes and at least 120 men were storm-stayed at Hay River for a week. Hay River saw its first bee then, the miners all got together and put the roof on the new house in one day and Mr. Marsh was very thankful for the help. The Mission workers were also invited out to dinner once or twice and enjoyed the change. On Sunday evening Mr. Marsh preached to over 100 white men and after service he treated all who liked it to a drink of milk. One man remarked that it was the first time in his life he had been to church and they did not take up an offering, but although the plate was not passed round, some of the miners left their offering when they left the house. On Monday evening a concert was held and all were surprised to find what a lot of talent was gathered there. One old gentleman, whose name (Israel Adam) heads our list of visitors, was asked if he played the violin. He answered, "No, I only play the fiddle," and he certainly could play the *fiddle*. At the end of a week a fair wind blew and they all sailed away. Some of them were never heard of again by any

of our staff, while others did not forget the little Mission which was, as some of them said, "a bright spot in a weary journey."

The Indians now began to think it would be a good thing to learn English and were as eager to learn as they were backward before.

In the spring just before the miners left two funerals took place. One of the school children, Marguerite, died with consumption and the old Chief Chantla passed away. He had always been a friend to the white man and was known and respected by both Indian and white man all over the country. He was ignorant and superstitious, but tried to do right according to the light he had and was always a staunch friend of the Mission, although he had been baptized in the Roman Catholic Church, which he left when our Mission was established at Hay River.

In September, 1898, Mr. Stanley Soanes left us, going to Simpson to help the Bishop, and one stormy night in the same month a whistle was heard blowing out in the lake. Mr. Marsh took his canoe and went out to see what was the matter. He found a little steamer, the "Lillian B," there with a

couple of scows in tow. It was blowing hard and she could not find the channel. Mr. Marsh brought them in and they camped. After waiting for a few days, hoping the storm would blow over, they decided to build a shack and winter at Hay River. There were seven men, all from Chicago except one who was a Canadian. Another party of three also came in and decided to stay and finally one morning news came that a man of whom almost every miner had spoken had arrived and was going to stay for the winter. His name was Christie and he was a graduate of Harvard University. He was a scientist and had made use of his scientific knowledge to build himself a boat. It was built in three sections, two triangles and a square, fastened together at the top. He said he believed in a party of one and travelled alone. So far as is known, he is the only man who ever brought a boat through the rapids on the Athabasca single-handed without an accident, but he reached McMurray in his queer-looking boat in safety, and also reached Hay River, but it never got any farther. He was a very retiring man and never came near the Mission until we had an accident. We were

getting home our fish in the fall, with the help of neighbours, when the fish stage fell, one of the timbers striking Mr. Charles Griffin, who was with the Mission at the time, having been engaged by the Bishop to work for the winter. He was insensible for several hours and it was feared the blow might have hurt his back. Mr. Christie then came over, offering help and giving good advice as to treatment.

All the white men were invited to spend Christmas at the Mission, and also New Year's, the festivities being much the same then as now. The white neighbours were the first to wish the Mission a Happy New Year, coming at twelve to ring the bells and fire a volley. Mr. Christie, seeing how much there was to do at the Mission, offered to teach the school and Mr. Marsh gladly accepted his offer, so he came to live in the Mission house. Besides the regular school every day there was now a night school with an average attendance of about fifteen ; in fact, all the young men of the village attended and quite a few girls. Of course, it had to be given up when they went on their winter hunt, but it was started again as soon as they came back. So many

men had been around all winter that Mr. Marsh had been able to get enough lumber sawn to finish the new house. One man who was very much liked at the Mission during that winter was Mr. John Clark from Minneapolis. His courage, brightness and implicit faith in God helped all.

At this time there were no trading posts at Hay River and the Indians were famous for their industry and honesty. The mining parties who spent the winter there had no locks on their outfits, yet they never missed an ounce, although the Indians knew what they had there and the fruit, flour, sugar, etc., must have been a great temptation to them.

In the spring the mining party belonging to the "Lillian B" broke up, some going one way and some another, Mr. Johnson, the engineer, leaving in April for Fort Simpson. Bishop Reeve had bought a steamer from one of the mining parties, the "Uncle Sam," and Mr. Johnson was to put it in order and run it for the summer.

Miss Marsh and Miss Veitch were also getting ready to leave the Mission. Miss Marsh's health was so poor she

could not stay longer and Miss Veitch was far from well.

Most of the lumber for the new house was prepared for use and Mr. Marsh hoped to have at least part of it ready to occupy before the coming winter. In spite of interruptions, Mr. Marsh had the garden in in good time and, after taking the plants from the hot-bed, it was planted with celery which grew well, furnishing the Mission with celery until nearly Christmas.

Early in June Mr. Johnson appeared in Bishop's Steamer, which was now called "Ella yah" (*i.e.*, "little boat"). He had eight or ten children with him from Norman and Wrigley. Miss Marsh and Miss Veitch left with Mr. Johnson for Fort Smith, leaving just Mr. and Mrs. Marsh and Miss Tims at the Mission, but they had plenty to do and not much time to think of themselves. Mr. Marsh took the school, as well as attending to his other duties, while Mrs. Marsh and Miss Tims had their hands full with the children. They had six boys and not a whole pair of pants for any of them, so had some sewing to do. Two of the children who came from Wrigley were Bella (now Philip Bougin's wife) and her sister

Mary. Bella was covered with scrofula sores which at first were so many and so bad that it took an hour to dress them every day.

The Mission was short of provisions that summer and one Saturday, after a week of storms when they could not visit the nets, they found themselves with three white fish, four dry fish and three or four pounds of bacon to feed twenty children over Sunday, and very little flour or rice to fall back on. To visit the nets was impossible, the lake was so rough. Mrs. Marsh and Miss Tims were standing at the kitchen table trying to plan how to spin the food out best when Moguli passed with between twenty and thirty pounds of moose meat on his back. He had killed a moose and, knowing the Mission was short of provisions, had brought them a generous portion. They felt that God truly supplied all their wants.

Time passed quickly and quietly until August, 1900, when Mr. Johnson returned, bringing Mr. Battersby, an engineer, with him. Mr. Johnson was to stay at Hay River and Mr. Battersby was to take the steamer to Simpson.

The Indians had been unusually healthy during these years. No epidemics had broken out and what deaths there were were due to old age. The children in the school were also healthy and well, all except Bella and Ricard, who were bad with scrofula.

On the first of September, 1899, some of the old friends returned to Hay River. They had been over at Fond du Lac all summer and were now going down to Peel River. Mr. Clark, Mr. Christie and Mr. Wilson were among the number and the workers were glad indeed to see them. Mr. Clark and Mr. Wilson decided to stay at Hay River all winter. Mr. Wilson undertook the school (there were now over twenty pupils) and Mr. Clark took care of the cattle and did all the hauling.

In the house there was Christy McSuain, Jane (a girl from Norman) and Josephine Lamelise. They all worked faithfully, the last named had not yet been spoiled. Some more pupils had come with the last steamer, among whom was May, now Francois Lamelise's wife.

The Mission had a good fishery that year and plenty of potatoes, but did not get much meat, their principal food

being fish and potatoes all winter, but few of them did not feel that they could eat a little more. Fish is not a good thing to sustain one for any length of time.

A very pleasant Christmas was spent that year. One evening, a little before Christmas, news came that a stranger was coming across the portage and when he arrived it proved to be an old friend, Dr. Brown, whom all were glad to see. As there were also two parties of miners wintering at Hay River who spent Christmas at the Mission, they had quite a large Christmas party. Dr. Brown left again for Resolution after Christmas and everything went on as usual.

The early part of the year 1900 brought a severe trial to the Mission in the critical illness of Mrs. Marsh after the birth of her little daughter, but through God's goodness and the Providential help of two miners who were wintering near by, the mother's life was spared and the child lived to be the comfort and joy of the household. About that time the R. C. Bishop sent a priest to build a house and settle in the village, but the school continued to prosper and was re-inforced by the re-

turn of Miss Veitch and the addition of Miss Wilgress and Mr. Battersby to the staff.

Perhaps the chief event of the year was the extension of the Treaty to the Indians of the district.

The year 1901 opened merrily with the sound of wedding bells, when Miss M. Tims and Mr. C. F. Johnson were united in marriage, and there was a day of general rejoicing in the village. In the summer Bishop Reeve visited the Mission and ordained Mr. Marsh to the Priesthood and confirmed 32 members of the congregation. Miss Veitch and Mr. Battersby left at that time while Miss Sulston joined the staff, and later on H. G. Wilson and S. Washburn were also engaged as helpers.

The next year, 1902, chiefly to be remembered as the date of the founding of the village church, was nevertheless one of mingled sorrow and joy. Closely following the happy birth of a son to Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, came the sad illness of the faithful teacher, A. L. Willson ; and after his departure for medical aid, came the temporary loss of our Principal, Rev. T. J. Marsh, who left on furlough in July, taking his wife

and children and two of the pupils, for a year's visit to Ontario. His last official act before leaving for his well-earned holiday, was the happy task of uniting in marriage the Mission interpreter, Charlie Norn, and a young girl from the village. The wedding festivities helped to take the minds of all from the sorrowful parting with so many good friends, and the union has proved a very happy one. Charlie, with his wife and little boys, lives in a cottage near the church and forms an integral part of the Mission.

A few weeks after Mr. Marsh's departure, the measles made their appearance and the school was soon turned into a hospital. With forty patients and without doctor or nurse they were helpless indeed, and their hearts were heavy when three of the pupils were laid to rest in the little cemetery with four from the village. In the height of the epidemic they were cheered by the arrival of Rev. J. R. Lucas (now Bishop) who had left his wife and child at his post in Fort Simpson to come to their help.

Several more pupils and a new school teacher, Miss Potts, were also gladly welcomed.

Early in 1903 Mr. Lucas was obliged to return to his post, and the school was again left without a Principal. The Mission had a short but cheering visit from Bishop Young and his daughter, and also from Rev. W. Spendlove of Fort Norman.

While daily expecting the return of Mr. Marsh, they were called upon to say good-bye to Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, the senior missionaries, whose furlough was due. In September of that year a disastrous fire broke out in one of the bedrooms which resulted in the sad death of a little invalid pupil, but by the energetic efforts of Miss Wilgress, Mr. Wilson and Mr. Washburn the building was saved. A few days later Mr. Marsh reached the end of his long and tedious journey of three months, arriving safely at Hay River with four new fellow workers. He was joyfully welcomed and, after landing his mixed cargo of chickens, pigs, cats, seed-potatoes, provisions and other annual supplies, the staff soon settled down to work again with renewed energy.

After a busy and happy winter with 41 pupils, five men and four women teachers, all were glad to receive a visit, in 1904, from the Bishop, who

had but lately recovered from a long siege of illness. Several changes were made in the staff that summer, Miss Wilgress and Mr. Wilson leaving in July, and Mrs. Marsh, with Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, returning to work in September.

1905 and 1906 showed steady progress on all sides. The church building advanced rapidly and a comfortable two-storey house was put up for the Principal. Another son was born to Mr. and Mrs. Johnson. The Indians made noticeable improvements in their log houses. In July, 1906, Miss Wilgress returned and few days later they were very sorry to part with Mrs. Marsh, her little daughter, and Miss Sulston. Mr. Washburn had gone home the year before.

1907 brought a still greater loss in the resignation of Rev. T. J. Marsh, who after fourteen years of labour in the Diocese felt the need of change into another sphere of work. Miss Potts and Miss Groves left on furlough at the same time.

A fresh start was given to the work by the arrival in September of that year of a new Principal, Rev. A. J. Vale, who at once took over the charge of the

school, as well as the task of learning the language. The Indians in the village began to show more desire to have their children taught and pupils came not only from the Mackenzie River posts, but also some from the Loucheux tribe at Peel River and one little Eskimo girl from the Arctic coast.

In 1908 the staff was much reduced by the loss of Mrs. Johnson, who after twelve years of devoted service was obliged to retire. Mr. Johnson had applied for furlough for both himself and his wife, but, as no one could be found to take his place, he very unselfishly decided to stay on for another year. Even then the workers were but four in number, but where human aid had failed the Almighty Father Himself intervened to provide relief for His children, and the little band of workers were unexpectedly reinforced by the addition of their three fellow labourers from the Peel River Mission, 1,200 miles further north, whose annual supplies had not come to hand and who had been led, in consequence, to come to Hay River for the winter. Rev. C. E. Whittaker soon became an active member of the staff, while Mrs. Whittaker secured the rest and change which

she greatly needed ; and Miss Hamilton fitted so well into her place that, when Mr. and Mrs. Whittaker returned to the north in 1909, she stayed on at Hay River where she was so eminently needed.

During that winter, one loss and disappointment must be recorded, *i.e.*, the return of Chief Sunrise and his family to the Roman Catholic Church.

1909 was another eventful year. Miss Orr left in July after six years of energetic service, and Mr. Johnson after eleven years.

Bishop Stringer paid the Mission a memorable visit and confirmed a large number. It was towards the end of this episcopal journey that he and Mr. Johnson met with such obstacles in their passage over the mountains that they lost their way and were only saved as by a miracle from death by starvation.

But while they were yet journeying hopefully within the Arctic circle, the Hay River Mission was busily preparing to receive new workers, Rev. H. C. Winch and a new engineer, Mr. H. W. Bowker, arrived in July, and in August wedding festivities were again heard and the little schoolroom was again the

scene of a marriage when Rev. A. J. Vale was united to Miss Nash by the Venerable Archdeacon Lucas, who, with his wife, was returning to Fort Simpson after a furlough in England.

Shortly after this happy event came the joyful day of the opening of the little church of St. Peter on Christmas Day, 1909, for the worship of God, when all hearts beat high with thankfulness for labour accomplished and difficulties surmounted.

Since then the work of the Mission has gone steadily forward. 1913 saw the consecration of Bishop Lucas for the oversight of the Mackenzie River Diocese. Miss Ostler, Miss Le Roy and Miss Harvie have been successively Matron of the School, with Miss Page, Miss Howard and Miss Jackson as assistants. Mr. Minchin, Mr. Pirie and Mr. Gee have been active and zealous helpers to Mr. Vale ; and a new up-to-date school-building has been erected, which the Principal hopes to have formally opened in July, 1917. More than 100 pupils have now passed through the School, the average number of boarders being about 40 ; and the steadfast aim of the supporters of the work is the building up in these boys

and girls of a true, stalwart Christian character that shall make the people of Mackenzie River a not unworthy part of the Church of Christ.

A FEW FACTS ABOUT ST. PETER'S CHURCH, HAY RIVER.

On the 8th of October, 1901, the Indians met in the Chief's house to talk over the subject of building a house for God. This was a purely voluntary meeting called by the Chief himself, unknown to Mr. Marsh, who was then in charge of the Mission. After discussing the subject among themselves, they came up to Mr. Marsh on Sunday, October 27th, and asked permission to carry out their wish to build a house for God to be used for worship. Mr. Marsh not only agreed to allow them to do so, but promised to help them build it. This pleased them very much and they set to work with a good will. The first log was cut October 29th and they went off to the woods that winter to cut logs. They worked at these until the fur-hunting season opened. Mr. Marsh's absence on furlough put a stop to the work in 1902 and, like

many another undertaking, it was hard to get it started again.

I should have recorded that the logs only were gotten out in 1901. The foundation was not laid until November 6th, 1903, and then by Mr. Marsh and Mr. Washburn, a Mission helper at that time. They had laid the foundation logs and the walls were built up four logs high. Work was not resumed until April 15th, 1905. At this time the Indian men began to saw the boards for the church.

July, 1905, saw another effort made. They completed the walls this time. No record is left of the putting on of the roof, but I doubt not this was done by Mr. Marsh and the Mission helpers without the assistance of the Indians. The Mission Journal has an entry showing work was recommenced on the church on June 5th, 1906, but other details are lacking. June 6th records eight men at work on the church. This may refer to the putting in of the windows or the roofing. June 14th, still working on the church. Indians helping.

The writer came to the Mission in the fall of 1907. In the spring of 1908 the walls of the church were plastered with lime and sand by Mr. Jones, a

Mission helper at that time. In the fall of the same year the school boys and I did some of the inside of the walls and in the following spring we were able to finish the plastering. During the summer we began to put the metal sheeting on the outside. This was completed by Mr. Bowker in the fall of 1909. The interior metal sheeting was put on also and painted so that we were able to hold service in it on Christmas Day, 1909. I neglected to say the Indians helped us to lay the floor in the church. This was done free on their part. They were very happy, indeed, to be able to worship in their own building and gathered to the number of 115, the largest number we have ever had.

The furnishing of the church are nearly all of them gifts from individual friends. The metal sheeting, inside, outside and ceiling, was purchased with money given by a bequest.

The benches were made by two old Indians of the village and one was made free of cost to us. The two chancel chairs were made and given by the head-man of the village and his wife.

The communion rail and pulpit were designed here and made by an Indian

under my instructions. Likewise the font.

The silver communion vessels are a memorial gift from the W. A. of Quebec Diocese.

The silver container for the baptismal water is the gift of the Church of the Epiphany, Parkdale, Ont.

The lectern was carved by the boys of our school ; and the font also.

The holy table cloth was embroidered by the girls of our School.

The lancet-shaped window sash frames and coloured glass are the gift of Miss E. M. Wilgress.

The bracket lamps for the wall are the gift of Miss Hamilton.

The weathered-oak stain for all the interior is the gift of Rev. and Mrs. A. J. Vale.

The pictures hung around the church depicting some of the scenes of our Saviour's life and parables are the gift of kind friends at home through the Rev. T. J. Marsh, but their names are not known to the writer.

The linoleum for the aisle of the church is the gift of a Young Girls' Bible Class in Brantford, Ont.

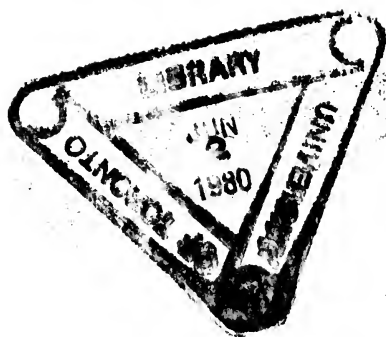
The hymn board and desk Bible are the gifts of Archdeacon Lucas, Fort Simpson, now our Bishop.

Prayer and hymn books are the gifts of the Church Bible and Prayer Book Society.

The organ was presented by Rev. Wm. Spendlove, at that time of Fort Resolution, Great Slave Lake.

A chancel carpet has been asked for and will shortly be provided by the W.A., if not already en route.

Published by the Literature Dept. of the
Women's Auxiliary to M.S.C.C.







PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE
CARDS OR SLIPS FROM THIS POCKET

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY

E	Historical sketch of
98	the origin and work
M6H5	of the Hay River
	Mission, Great Slave
	Lake, N.W.T.

